



State of Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

Elizabeth Burmaster, State Superintendent

Homebound Instruction: A Question and Answer Document for Parents and Guardians

The Department of Public Instruction receives many inquiries from parents, guardians, schools, and others regarding homebound instruction. This document will help to clarify what parents/guardians can expect when requesting homebound instruction for their son/daughter.

Please note that different standards apply to homebound instruction for special education students. This document does not address these standards.

1. *My child can't attend school at this time due to an illness/injury/surgery. How do I request homebound instruction?*

The actual procedure for requesting homebound instruction from your local school district is not determined at the state level, but by each local district. Start by discussing your concern with the school principal. Some districts require that requests be put in writing.

2. *If my child's physician writes a prescription for homebound instruction, isn't the school required to provide it?*

No. The school is required to **consider** the request, but may or may not choose to provide the instruction. School districts have 90 days to respond to a written request for homebound instruction. If your child has been evaluated by an Individual Education Plan (IEP) team and considered for special education services, but is not currently receiving these services, then the school district has 30 days to tell you if they will provide homebound instruction.

3. *My child is having mental health issues. Can I request homebound instruction for this type of illness?*

Yes. Mental illnesses or concerns can be a legitimate reason to request homebound instruction. Please keep in mind that school districts are not required to provide homebound instruction for mental or physical illnesses.

4. *If the district does provide homebound instruction, how much do they need to provide?*

Because homebound instruction is not required, there are no standards as to the amount of instruction, the time of day it is delivered, or the classes offered. Even in the best of circumstances, homebound instruction cannot completely replace the experiences your child would get by attending school. A licensed teacher teaches homebound instruction, when it is offered.

5. *Isn't this standard different for high school students, due to graduation requirements?*

No. Because schools are not required to provide homebound instruction, they can determine appropriate amounts of instruction on an individual basis, if it is provided.

6. *If I request homebound instruction and it is denied, will I get in trouble for not sending my child to school?*

A child who is excused because they are “temporarily not in proper physical or mental condition to attend a school program, but who can be expected to return to a school program upon termination or abatement of the illness or condition” cannot be found truant or habitually truant. However, the school can request a written statement from your child’s physician, dentist, chiropractor, optometrist, psychologist, or Christian Science practitioner as proof of the condition of your child. This excuse must state the time period for which it is valid and cannot be valid for longer than 30 days. If your child needs to miss school longer than 30 days, the school could ask for another written excuse.

7. *My child isn't in special education now, but I wonder if this illness should change that?*

If you feel your child’s condition may be a disability requiring special education, you can request that your child be evaluated by an IEP team and considered for special education services. Please keep in mind that regardless of the outcome of this process, this is not a guarantee that homebound instruction will be provided. You will be highly involved in this process and are a member of the IEP team.

8. *My daughter is pregnant. Can I request homebound instruction for her?*

School age parents are eligible for services that allow them to continue and complete their education. This may include homebound instruction on a temporary basis. Be sure to tell the school that your child is or will be a school age parent.

9. *Is homebound instruction the same as home schooling?*

No. In a home-based Private Education Program, or “home schooling,” parents are responsible for their child’s education. They must register their child with DPI to avoid their child being considered truant. The school provides homebound instruction, when it is provided.

10. *Can I enroll my child in home-based private education if the district denies my request for homebound instruction?*

Parents always have the right to register their child for home-based private education. Call 888-245-2732 to request a form.

11. My child attends private school. Can I request homebound instruction from my local public school district?

You can request it, but the public school is not obligated to provide it, just as they are not obligated to provide it for students attending the public school.

12. If the district denies my request for homebound, can I request other changes in my child's schedule, such as a shortened schedule?

Yes. Parents have the right to request modifications in their child's educational program. As with homebound instruction, the district may or may not choose to modify your child's program. It is best to meet with school staff to discuss what is best for your child.

For further information or questions, contact Nic Dibble, Consultant, School Social Work Services, at (608) 266-0963 or nic.dibble@dpi.state.wi.us.

This document is meant to provide guidance to school districts regarding homebound instruction. It is not meant to substitute for legal advice. Please consult your attorney for assistance in individual cases.

The reference used in writing this document is Wisconsin Statute 118.15, Compulsory Attendance. Copies of this statute are available at the State of Wisconsin legislative Web site at www.legis.state.wi.us or at any public library.